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SOURCES AND ANALOGUES OF "THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF." PART I

INTRODUCTION

Of the numerous poems erroneously attributed to Chaucer, probably the best-known, and certainly one of the best, is *The Flower and the Leaf*.¹ It first appeared in Speght's folio of 1598, and was regularly reprinted with Chaucer's *Works* until 1878. During this period, owing partly, no doubt, to the modernization by Dryden,² the poem was usually regarded as one of Chaucer's most characteristic and charming pieces. Keats wrote a sonnet about it; Scott, Campbell, Irving, Mrs. Browning, were all fond of it; the editors of selections from Chaucer reprinted it; Taine quoted from it to illustrate Chaucer's most notable merits.³ Now, however, the question of Chaucerian authorship must be regarded as settled adversely,⁴ for reasons which need not be repeated here. In this investigation it is taken for granted that

¹ Skeat, *Chaucerian and Other Pieces* (Clarendon Press, 1897), pp. 361-79. References will be to this edition.

² *Fables*, 1700.

³ It may be of interest to indicate the vogue of the poem by the following specific references: Warton, *History of English Poetry* (1774-81); see Index in Hazlitt ed. (1871). Godwin, *Life of Chaucer* (2d ed., 1804), Vol. III, pp. 249 ff. Todd, *Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer* (1810), pp. 275 ff. Scott, *Rokeby* (1813), Canto VI, xxvi. Keats, *Sonnet Written on a Blank Space at the End of Chaucer's Tale of "The Floure and the Lefe"* (1817). T. Campbell, *Specimens of the British Poets* (1819), Vol. I, pp. 70 ff.; Vol. II, p. 17. Irving, *Sketch Book* (1819), "Rural Life in England." S. W. Singer, "Life of Chaucer," in *The British Poets* (Chiswick, 1822), Vol. I, pp. xvi, xvii, xxi. Hazlitt, *Select Poets of Great Britain* (1825), p. ix; *Farewell to Essay Writing* (1828). Clarke, *The Riches of Chaucer* (2d ed., 1835), Vol. I, pp. 52 ff. E. B. Browning, *The Book of the Poets* (1842). H. Reed, *Lectures on English Literature* (1855), p. 136. Sandras, *Étude sur Chaucer* (1859), pp. 95 ff. G. P. Marsh, *Origin and History of the English Language* (1862), p. 414. Taine, *History of English Literature* (1864-65), Book I, chap. iii, 3. Minto, *Characteristics of the English Poets* (1874), p. 15. Ward, *Chaucer*, in "English Men of Letters" series (1879), chaps. i, iii. Engel, *Geschichte der englischen Litteratur* (Leipzig, 1883), p. 74. Bierbaum, *History of the English Language and Literature* (1895), p. 34. Filon, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* (2d ed., 1896), p. 54. Palgrave, *Landscape in Poetry* (1897), p. 122. Gosse, *Modern English Literature* (1898), p. 44. Saintsbury, *Short History of English Literature* (1898), pp. 119, 120. There are also nineteenth century modernizations by Lord Thurlow and Powell, and a French translation by Chatelain.

⁴ By ten Brink, *Chaucer Studien* (1870), pp. 156 ff.; Skeat, Introduction to Bell's Chaucer (1878), and *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. lxii ff.; Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer* (1892), Vol. I, pp. 489 ff. As is well known, Tyrwhitt first expressed doubt of Chaucer's authorship (1775), but his suggestion was hardly taken seriously for nearly a century.

the author was an imitator of Chaucer, writing during the first half-century or so after his master's death.¹

The plan of treatment adopted for study of the sources and analogues of the poem is as follows:

1. The central allegory of the Orders of the Flower and the Leaf.
2. The accessories of the central allegory: the significance of the white and green costumes, and the chaplets of leaves and flowers; the choice of the nightingale and the goldfinch as singers for the Leaf and the Flower respectively; the cult of the daisy, and so forth.
3. The general setting and machinery of the poem; its relations to other vision poems with the springtime setting.
4. Conclusion as to the most influential sources.

SYNOPSIS OF THE POEM

The following summary of the action of *F. L.*² will be useful:

¹ I say *his* because, although the poem purports to be by a woman, there is no adequate reason for assuming that it is by a woman. I hope to show in a later article that Professor Skeat's theory of common authorship of *The Flower and the Leaf* and *The Assembly of Ladies* is untenable, and that various striking resemblances of the former to the work of Lydgate suggest that he may have been the author.

² In the course of this article abbreviations will be used as follows:

- A. G.* = *Assembly of Gods*, attributed to Lydgate, E. E. T. S.
A. L. = *Assembly of Ladies*, pseudo-Chaucerian poem.
A. Y. L. I. = *As You Like It*.
B. D. = Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess*.
B. K. = Lydgate's *Complaint of the Black Knight*.
C. A. = Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.
C. B. = Lydgate's *Chorl and the Bird*.
C. L. = *The Court of Love*, pseudo-Chaucerian poem.
C. N. = *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, pseudo-Chaucerian poem.
C. O. = *Debat du Coer et de l'Oeil*.
C. T. = Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.
Chansons = *Chansons du XV^{me} siècle*, Société des Anciens Textes Français.
E. E. T. S. = Early English Text Society.
F. L. = *The Flower and the Leaf*.
Fabel = *Fabel dou Dieu d'Amours*.
L. G. W. = Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*.
M. M. = *Measure for Measure*.
M. P. = Lydgate's *Minor Poems*, ed. Halliwell, Percy Society.
Night. = Lydgate's *Two Nightingale Poems*, E. E. T. S.
P. F. = Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*.
R. R. = *Roman de la Rose*.
R. S. = Lydgate's *Reson and Sensuallyte*, E. E. T. S.
S. T. S. = Scottish Text Society.
T. C. = Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.
T. G. = Lydgate's *Temple of Glas*, E. E. T. S.
Thebes = Lydgate's *Story of Thebes*.
Venus = *De Venus la Deesse d'Amor*.

Very early on a May morning, when the spring growth is at its height, the poet, represented as a woman to whom sleep is “ful unmete,” goes forth to a pleasant grove of oaks set out at regular intervals. With joy she hears the birds sing, and listens especially, though at first in vain, for the nightingale. Soon she finds a narrow path, overgrown with grass and weeds, which leads to a pleasant “herber,” terraced with fresh grass and surrounded by a hedge of sycamore and sweet-scented eglantine. This hedge is so thick that anyone outside cannot see in, though one inside can see out. Beside the arbor is a beautiful medlar tree, in which a goldfinch leaps from bough to bough, eating buds and blossoms and singing merrily. Opposite this is a laurel tree, which gives out healing odors like the eglantine, and within whose branches a nightingale sings even more ravishingly than the goldfinch. The poet is delighted with the spot, which seems like an earthly paradise, and sits down on the grass to listen to the birds.

Soon she hears voices like those of angels, and in a moment a “world of ladies” come out of a grove near by, singing sweetly and dancing, under the leadership of the most beautiful member of the company. All are brilliantly arrayed in surcoats of white velvet set with precious stones. They are soon followed by a “rout” of men at arms, also clad in white, with decorations of cloth of gold. Both men and women wear chaplets of leaves—laurel, woodbine, hawthorn, *agnus castus*. After the knights have jousted with one another, they join the ladies in doing obeisance before the laurel tree. Then come from an adjacent field the adherents of the Flower—knights and ladies hand in hand, clad in green and wearing chaplets of flowers. This company go dancing into a mead, where they kneel before a tuft of blossoms while one of their number sings a “bargaret” in praise of the daisy. Soon, however, the heat of noon withers the flowers and burns the ladies and their knights; a wind blows down the flowers; and hail and rain bedraggle the company. Meanwhile those in white beneath the laurel tree are unharmed by the elements, and, when they perceive the plight of the others, go to their aid and kindly entertain them. Then the nightingale flies from the laurel tree to the lady of the Leaf, Diana, and the gold-

finch from the medlar tree to Flora, the queen of the Flower, both birds singing their loudest.

The two companies ride away together, and the poet, coming forth from her concealment, asks a lady in white for an explanation of what she has seen. The adherents of the Leaf, she is told, are people who have been chaste, brave, and steadfast in love; the adherents of the Flower are people who have loved idleness, and cared for nothing but hunting and hawking and playing in meads. Then, after explaining why the Leaf is to be preferred to the Flower, the lady of the Leaf asks the poet to which she will do service. The poet chooses the Leaf, and the lady hastens after her company.

CHAPTER I. THE CENTRAL ALLEGORY: THE ORDERS OF THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF

Obviously the kernel of the poem is the allegory of the Flower and the Leaf—the strife between two contrasted orders of knights and ladies, with one of which the author becomes allied. Distinct mention of these orders is made by three persons besides our unknown poet—by Chaucer, Deschamps, and Charles d'Orleans.

CHAUCER'S MENTION OF THE ORDERS

It has long been well known that in the Prologue to his *Legend of Good Women* Chaucer refers to the rivalry of the Orders of the Flower and the Leaf.¹ He has been speaking of his love for the daisy, and asks lovers to help him in his labor of adequately praising it—

Whether ye ben with the leef or with the flour.

He says modestly that he can only be a gleaner among poets, taking what others have left; but he hopes to be forgiven for his lack of originality,

Sin that ye see I do hit in the honour
Of love, and eek in service of the flour,
Whom that I serve as I have wit or might.

¹Text A, ll. 70-80; B, ll. 72, 189-96. First noted in Urry's edition of 1721, and taken as a direct allusion to *F. L.*, which Chaucer was assumed to have previously composed. See articles by Professor Kittredge, in *Modern Philology*, Vol. I, pp. 1ff.; and Professor J. L. Lowes, *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, Vol. XIX, pp. 593 ff.

The lines in text A corresponding to these are:

Sith hit is seid in forthering and honour
Of hem that either serven leef or flour;

and are immediately followed by an explanation which in text B does not come till l. 188. In the latter text the poet proceeds with praise of the “flour” referred to in l. 82. He tells how he could

Dwellen alwey, the joly month of May, (176)

with nothing to do

But for to loke upon the dayesye,

The emperice and flour of floures alle.

But natheless, ne wene nat that I make
In preysing of the flour agayn the leef,
No more than of the corn agayn the sheef:

For, as to me, nis lever noon ne lother;
I nam with-holden yit with never nother.
Ne I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
Wel brouken they hir service or labour;
For this thing is al of another tonne,
Of olde story, er swich thing was begonne.

The last three lines in the corresponding passage in A are also worth quotation, because they are a trifle more specific, especially in the use of the italicized words:

That nis nothing the entent of my labour,
For this *werk* is al of another tunne,
Of olde story, er swich *stryf* was begunne.

“This *werk*” apparently means the poem in hand, and “swich *stryf*” the strife of the Flower and the Leaf.

Since the author of our poem was first of all an imitator of Chaucer, it seems probable that the passage cited above furnished him direct inspiration. It is also entirely proper to conclude from Chaucer’s language, especially in connection with that of Deschamps, soon to be quoted, that there was a sentimental strife between orders of the Flower and the Leaf, and that it was of comparatively recent origin when Chaucer wrote his Prologue, about 1385–86.

DESCHAMPS' MENTION OF THE ORDERS

Four short poems by Eustache Deschamps, in which the strife of the Flower and the Leaf is mentioned, were written probably about the same time as Chaucer's Prologue to his *Legend*.¹ Two ballades and a rondeau are in favor of the Flower, and one ballade in favor of the Leaf. It seems desirable to reprint them in full:

I. BALADE AMOUREUSE

(*Sur l'ordre de la Fleur*)

Qui est a choiz de deux choses avoir,
 Eslire doit et choisir la meillour.
 Et si me faut que je prengne, savoir:
 De deux arbres ou la fueille ou la flour:
 Qu'en la fueille est plaisir pour sa verdour,
 Et qui resjoist les cuers des vrays amans,
 Et aux oysiaux fait chanter leurz doulz chans,
 Et tient toudiz une saison sa place,
 Maiz quant au fort sa beauté est nians,
 J'aim plus la fleur que la fueille ne face. 10

Car la fueille n'a pas tant de pouoir,
 De bien, de senz, de force et de valour
 Comme la flour; et ce puet apparoir
 Qu'elle a beauté, bonté, fresche coulour,
 Et rent a tous tresprecieux odour,
 Et fait bon fruit que mains sont desirans,
 Duquel avoir est uns chascuns engrans.
 Maiz la fueille sans flour et fruit trespasse,
 Et sans odour devient poudre en tous temps.
 J'aim plus la fleur que la fueille ne face. 20

Pour ce qu'elle vault mieulx, a dire voir,
 Que la fueille qui n'a nulle douçour,
 Et fruit ne fait au matin ny au soir.
 La fueille n'est fors que pour faire honnour
 Et pour garder celle fleur nuit et jour
 De la pluie, du tempest et des vans,
 Comme celle qui n'est que sa servans,

¹ See Professor Kittredge's discussion of them in *Modern Philology*, Vol. I, pp. 3-6; and Professor Lowes' article cited above, p. 124, n. 1. The probable relation of Deschamps' ballades to *F. L.* was first pointed out by Sandras in his *Étude sur Chaucer* (1859), pp. 102, 103. He gave no detailed attention to them, however, and did not mention the rondeau. As Professor Kittredge says, editors of Chaucer have ignored them in relation to *L. G. W.*; and even Professor Skeat does not mention them in connection with his reprint of *F. L.* The poems are grouped together in the complete edition of Deschamps' works published by the Société des Anciens Textes Français, Vol. IV, pp. 257 ff.

Maiz en tous temps a fleur de tous la grace,
Comme belle, gracieuse et plaisans.
J'aim plus la fleur que la fueille ne face. 30

II. BALADE.

(*Des deux ordres de la Feuille et de la Fleur*)
(*Éloge de la Fleur*)

Pour ce que j'ay oy parler en France
De deux ordres en l'amoureuse loy,
Que dames ont chascune en defferance,
L'une fueille et l'autre fleur, j'octroy
Mon corps, mon cuer a la fleur; et pourquoy?
Pour ce qu'en tout a pris, loange et grace
Plus que fueille qui en pourre trespasse
Et n'a au mieux fors que verde coulour,
Et la fleur a beauté qui trestout passe.
A droit jugier je me tien a la flour. 10

Celle doit on avoir en reverance,
Sy l'y aray; qu'en toutes choses voy
Loer la flour en bonté, en vaillance,
En tous deduis, en manniere, en arroy;
S'on scet rien bon, c'est la flour pour un roy.
En tous estas vient la fleur a plaisance:
De tout dit on, et par grant exellance,
Que cilz ou celle a la fleur sans retour
De quoy que soit, tele est l'acoustumance:
A droit jugier je me tien a la flour. 20

Amour la sieut, doulz desir, esperance,
Beauté, bonté, et de tous loer l'oy.
Coulour, odour et fruit de souffisance
Viennent de ly. Maiz mie n'aperçoy
Que la fueille ait nulle vertu en soy,
Ne que douçour, fruit, ne grant plaisir face.
Maiz maintes foyz apalit et efface,
Ne rien ne voy en li de grant vigour
Fors de couvrir la fleur dessus sa place:
A droit jugier je me tien la flour. 30

Celle humble flour aray en remembrance
Qui tant noble est, humble et de maintien coy,
Que n'est tresor, pierre, avoir ne finance,
Qui comparer peust a li par ma foy.
Son ordre prain et humblement reçoï,
Qui plus digne est d'esmeraude ou topace:

Guillaume fay La Tremouille, or li place
 Que du porter me face tant d'onour;
 Car ordre n'est qui plus mon cuer solace.
 A droit jugier je me tien a la flour. 40

Et qui vouldra avoir la congnoissance
 Du tresdoulx nom que par oir congnoy
 Et du pais ou est sa demourance
 Voist en l'ille d'Albyon en recoy,
 En Lancastre le trouvera, ce croy.
 P. H. et E. L. I. P. P. E. trace,
 Assemble tout; ces .viii. lettres compasse,
 S'aras le nom de la fleur de valour,
 Qui a gent corps, beaux yeux et douce face.
 Au droit jugier je me tien a la flour. 50

L'ENVOY

Royne d'amours, de douce contenance,
 Qui tout passez en senz et en honnour,
 Plus qu'a la fueille vous faiz obeissance:
 A droit jugier je me tien a la flour.

III. RONDEAU

(*Sur Elyon de Nillac*)

Tresdouce flour, Elyon de Nillac,
 Me tien a vous et non pas a la fueille,
 Car po est gent qui avoir ne la veille.
 On met souvent les fueilles en un sac,
 Ains que la fruit ne que la fleur se queille. 5
 Tresdouce flour, Elyon de Nillac,
 Me tien a vous et non pas a la fueille.

Maiz vous estes le precieux eschac
 Qui ne souffrez que nulz pour vous se deuille.
 A vous me rent, vo pité me recueille; 10
 Tresdouce flour, Elyon de Nillac,
 Me tien a vous et non pas a la fueille,
 Car po est gent qui avoir ne la vueille.

IV. AUTRE BALADE

(*Des deux ordres de la Feuille et de la Fleur*)
 (*Éloge de la Feuille*)

Vous qui prizez et loez la fleur tant,
 Voulons par droit la fueille soustenir.
 Car au jour d'ui n'est ne petit ne grant,

S'il a raison, que ne doye tenir
 Que Dieux la fist en tous arbres venir
 Pour resjoyr dames et damoisiaux
 Et pour rendre leur chant aux doulx oysiaux.
 Par sa verdour tuit nous esjoyssons,
 Sans li ne puet li mondes estre biaux.
 Pour ce a fueille plus qu'a fleur nous tenons. 10

Or responde qui veult, en arguant:
 La fleur ne puet fors de la fueille issir,
 Et se la fleur de la fueille descent,
 Sa mere est donc la fueille sans mentir;
 Naistre la fait, puis croistre et espennir,
 Et la norrit en ses tresdoulx rainsiaux
 Virginalment; fueille est riches joyaux,
 Qui ainsi fait la fleur dont nous parlons;
 Sur toutes fleurs est la fueille royaux:
 Pour ce a fueille plus qu'a fleur nous tenons. 20

Et s'il avient qu'il face un po de vent,
 La fleur verrez et sa colour palir,
 En ordure chiet et va au neant,
 Fruit et colour li faut perdre et perir.
 Maiz la fueille ne puet nul temps morir;
 Tousjours se tient forte, ferme et loyaufx,
 Vert en couleur et amoureuse a ciaux
 Qu'elle recoit en l'ombre de ses dons,
 En destruisant les chaleurs desloyaux.
 Pour ce a fueille plus qu'a fleur nous tenons. 30

En grans chaleurs voit on prendre souvent
 Feuilles de saulx pour malades garir;
 Es cours royaux, en maint riche couvent,
 Arbres feuillés pour les lieux rafrechir.
 En May voit on chascun de vert vestir;
 On fait dossier es cours des arbrissiaux;
 Feuilles porte qui veult estre novviaux:
 En cuer d'iver feuilles de lierre avons,
 Maiz fleur n'avez en arbres n'en vessiaux.
 Pour ce a fueille plus qu'a fleur nous tenons. 40

De vostre fruit que la fleur va portant
 Voit on aucun par droit anientir;
 Du mengier sont maint et maintes engrant,
 Maiz petit vault pour le corps maintenir.
 Fleur ne se puet a fueille appartenir;

Dessoubz li vont cerfs, bisches et chevriaux
 Sanglers et dains, connins et laperiaux,
 Tous les deduis que par le bos querons,
 Fueille en lorier, de houx, jardins, preaux;
 Pour ce a fueille plus qu'a fleur nous tenons. 50

L'ENVOY

Royne sur fleurs en vertu demourant,
 Galoys d'Aunoy, Mornay Pierre ensemement
 De Tremoille, li borgnes Porquerons,
 Et d'Araynes Lyonnet vont loant,
 Et Thuireval vostre bien qui est grant;
 Pour ce a fueille plus qu'a fleur nous tenons.

It is obvious that the foregoing poems are of very unequal value, so far as any possible relation with *F. L.*, or any influence upon it, is concerned. The rondeau (III), indeed, may be disregarded altogether. It is merely a personal tribute, couched in language more naturally applied to a woman, but in this case apparently intended for a woman to send to a man, since Hélon de Naillac was councilor and chamberlain of King Charles VI of France.¹ A personal compliment, also, to Philippa of Lancaster, is the chief burden of the second ballade, in favor of the Flower (II); which, however, is of considerably greater value to us than the rondeau, because it specifically declares that the poet has heard of the existence, in French amorous law, of Orders of the Flower and the Leaf. Though here said to be orders of women, they apparently did not exclude men from membership, for in both the second and the third ballades (II and IV) we find the names of men belonging to the orders.

The first and last ballades, then, are of most interest to us, because they present clear-cut arguments in favor, respectively, of the flower and the leaf. In the first the poet says that, though the verdure of the leaf gives pleasure to the hearts of true lovers,² and moves the birds to sing sweetly,³ and though the leaf lasts during a season,⁴ yet, because its beauty is nothing, he prefers the flower; for the beauty and color and odor of the flower, and the

¹ Raynaud, *Œuvres de Deschamps*, Vol. X, p. 215; Kittredge, *Modern Philology*, Vol. I, p. 5.

² Cf. I, 5-6; II, 8; IV, 8, 27; *F. L.*, 485, 486, 551-54.

³ Cf. I, 7; IV, 7; *F. L.*, 447, 448.

⁴ Cf. I, 8; IV, 25, 26; *F. L.*, 551-56.

fruit that comes from it, make it of much greater value than the leaf, which has none of these good qualities, but is worthless except to protect the flower from rain and wind.¹ Because of the side taken in I and II, the argument is of course directly opposed to that in *F. L.*; yet it is surprising how many of the points made in favor of the leaf are suggested here—its pleasant verdure and enduring quality, its influence on birds and true lovers, and the protection it affords the flower against storms of various kinds. Indeed, there is little else but elaboration of these points in the long ballade in favor of the leaf (IV). The flower, we are told, springs from the leaf and depends upon it for nourishment. If a little wind comes, the flower loses its color and falls without producing fruit; but the leaf never dies. Instead, it always remains green and fresh and “loyal,” protecting those in its shadow from the heat, and healing those who have been sick.²

Thus we see that there are found in these ballades of Deschamps nearly all the arguments of our poem based upon the physical characteristics of the flower and the leaf. The attribution of analogous mental and moral characteristics to the members of the respective orders, however, is not even hinted at by Deschamps. Nevertheless, such similarity of thought and expression as we have found, especially between the third stanza of Ballade IV and the accounts of the storm in *F. L.*, can hardly be accounted for except by actual influence of Deschamps on the English poet, or joint indebtedness of both to a common source not now known.

CHARLES D'ORLEANS' MENTION OF THE ORDERS

Some time during his imprisonment in England from 1415 to 1440, Charles d'Orleans wrote the following ballades:³

POÈME DE LA PRISON

Ballade LXI

Le premier jour du mois de May,
Trouvé me suis en compaignie
Qui estoit, pour dire le vray,

¹ Cf. I, 24-27; II, 28, 29; IV, 16, 21-30; *F. L.*, 354-78, 551-65. ² Cf. IV, 31, 32; *F. L.*, 407-13.

³ See *Poésies*, ed. d'Hericault (Paris, 1896); Vol. I, pp. 79 ff. So far as I am aware, these poems have not been previously mentioned in print in connection with *F. L.* My attention was called to them by Professor John M. Manly.

De gracieuseté garnie;
 Et, pour oster merencolie,
 Fut ordonné qu'on choisiroit,
 Comme fortune donneroit,
 La fueille plaine de verdure,
 Ou la fleur pour toute l'année;
 Si prins le feuille pour livrée, 10
 Comme lors fut mon aventure.

Tantost après je m'avisay
 Qu'à bon droit l'avoye choisie
 Car, puis que par mort perdu ay
 La fleur, de tous biens enrichie,
 Qui estoit ma Dame, m'amie,
 Et qui de sa grace m'amoit
 Et pour son amy me tenoit,
 Mon cueur d'autre flour n'a pas cure;
 Adonc cogneu que me pensée 20
 Acordoit à ma destinée,
 Comme fut lors mon aventure.

Pource, le fueille porteray
 Cest an, sans que point je l'oublie;
 Et à mon povoir me tendray
 Entierement de sa partie;
 Je n'ay de nulle flour envie,
 Porte la qui porter la doit,
 Car la fleur, que mon cueur amoit
 Plus que nulle autre créature, 30
 Est hors de ce monde passée,
 Qui son amour m'avoit donnée,
 Comme lors fut mon aventure.

ENVOI

Il n'est fueille, ne fleur qui dure
 Que pour un temps, car esprouvée
 J'ay la chose que j'ay contée
 Comme lors fut mon aventure.

Ballade LXII

Le lendemain du premier jour de May,
 Dedens mon lit ainsi que je dormoye,
 Au point du jour, m'avint que je songay
 Que devant moy une fleur je véoye
 Qui me disoit: Amy, je me souloye
 En toy fier, car pieçà mon party

Tu tenoies, mais mis l'as en oubly,
En soustenant la fueille contre moy;
J'ay merueille que tu veulx faire ainsi
Riens n'ay meffait, se pense je, vers toy. 10

Tout esbahy alors je me trouvay,
Si respondy, au mieulx que je savoye:
Tresbelle fleur, oncques je ne pensay
Faire chose qui desplaire te doye:
Se, pour esbat, Aventure m'envoye
Que je serve le fueille cest an cy,
Doy je pour tant estre de toy banny?
Nennil certes, je fais comme je doy
Et se je tiens le party qu'ay choisy,
Riens n'ay meffait, ce pense je, vers toy. 20

Car non pour tant, honneur te porteray
De bon vouloir, quelque part que je soye,
Tout pour l'amour d'une fleur que j'amay
Ou temps passé. Dieu doint que je la voye
En Paradis, après ma mort, en joye;
Et pource, fleur, chierement je te pry,
Ne te plains plus, car cause n'as pourquoy,
Puis que je fais ainsi que tenu suy,
Riens n'ay meffait, ce pense je, vers toy.

ENVOI

Le verité est telle que je dy, 30
J'en fais juge Amour, le puissant Roy;
Tresdoulce fleur, point ne te cry mercy,
Riens n'ay meffait, se pense je, vers toy.

These two poems clearly have no close relation to *F. L.* They may be earlier than it is, but there are no such resemblances of thought and expression as to indicate that our author knew them; or, conversely, that the Duke of Orleans knew the English poem. The most that can be said of them is that they appear to be based upon the same amorous strife, which they connect with the celebration of the first of May by a well-dressed company whose members—"pour oster merencolie"—decide to choose the leaf or the flower as livery for the whole year. This poet chooses the leaf, not because of any such moral superiority as it symbolizes in *F. L.*, nor even because of the greater durability and usefulness which are emphasized in the last ballade

from Deschamps; but because since his lady's death he cares for no flower but her. And he comes to the melancholy conclusion that neither leaf nor flower lasts more than a short time.

DOES GOWER MENTION THE ORDERS?

It seems generally to have been taken for granted that Gower refers to the strife of the Flower and the Leaf in the description, in the eighth book of the *Confessio Amantis*, of Cupid and his "parlement"

Of gentil folk that whilom were
Lovers.¹

This company are crowned with

Garlandes noght of o color,
Some of the lef, some of the flour,
And some of grete Perles were.

It is, of course, probable that the author of *F. L.* knew this passage from *C. A.*; partly because of the resemblances pointed out by Professor Skeat, and partly because a fifteenth-century English writer of the school of Chaucer could hardly have been ignorant of Gower's great English poem. And it must be admitted as quite possible that Gower had the strife of Flower and Leaf in mind. Yet the last line quoted above seems to preclude the idea of a twofold division in Gower's company, and suggests the probability that the reference is merely to the common custom of wearing garlands, generally of leaves and flowers, at the springtime celebrations.² Such a company as that described by Gower is regularly met in Court of Love poems,³ and garlands are part of its regular attire. Professor Skeat zealously attempts to show greater resemblance between Gower and *F. L.* by skipping a number of pages to

The grene lef is overthrowe,
and the following lines,⁴ which he compares with *F. L.*, ll. 358-64,

¹See Skeat's *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. lxviii-ix; Gower's *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, Vol. III, p. 546; Kittredge in *Modern Philology*, Vol. I, p. 2. Gower's mention of garlands of the flower and the leaf was first noticed by Warton, *History of English Poetry*, sec. 19; ed. Hazlitt, Vol. III, p. 31. The passage in Gower is Book VIII, ll. 2457 ff.

²See pp. 153-57 below.

³See W. A. Neilson's "Origins and Sources of The Court of Love," *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, Vol. VI (1899), chap. iii, *passim*.

⁴*C. A.*, Book VIII, ll. 2854 ff.

where the overthrow of the followers of the Flower is described. Any such comparison is entirely unjustifiable, however, as the passage in *C. A.* is merely part of a rehearsal of the progress of the seasons, and has no reference whatever to the leaves which the gentlefolks of Cupid's company wore.

COMPARISONS OF FLOWER AND LEAF

One other alleged reference to the strife of the Flower and the Leaf requires brief mention. It is discussed in an article by Professor C. F. McClumpha,¹ calling attention to Deschamps' *Lay de Franchise* as a possible model for *F. L.* Deschamps, says Mr. McClumpha, "attaches a brief comparison of the flower and the leaf," and the author of the English poem, beginning with the same personages, preserves the allegory. This is a singular error; for, though Deschamps indulges in a good deal of compliment to an unnamed feminine flower, who is compared with the daisy, he nowhere even mentions the leaf or hints at the strife of the Flower and the Leaf. The word *feuille* does not occur in the poem, except as applied (in l. 45) to the petals of the flower; and there is not the remotest suggestion of an allegory of the Flower and the Leaf.²

An obscure comparison of the flower and the leaf is found in a short Picard poem of the thirteenth century,³ which it seems desirable to quote in full:

L'HONNEUR ET L'AMOUR
 Qui de .II. biens le millour⁴
 Laist, encontre sa pensée,
 Et prent pour li le piour
 Bien croi que c'est esp[ro]vée
 Très-haute folour.
 Cause ai d'avoir mon penser
 A ce que serve ai esté
 Ai et sui de vrai ami

¹ *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. IV (1889), cols. 402 ff.

² Deschamps' poem is of some importance, however, in relation to the general setting and machinery of *F. L.*, and will therefore be considered further in chap. iii of this investigation.

³ See "Fragment d'une Anthologie Picarde," ed. A. Boucherie, *Revue des Langues Romanes*, Vol. III (1872), pp. 311 ff. The poem cited is on pp. 321, 322.

⁴ Cf. Deschamps' Ballade I, p. 126 above.

Sage, courtois, bien secré,
 G[ou]yrené par meureté, 10
 Et gentil, preu et hardi,
 Et qui sur tous a m'amour.
 Dont sui souvent eno[rée]
 D'autrui amer, sans secour.
 Mais pour mon mieuls sui donnée,
 S'en ferai demour.

Lasse! il m'est trop mal tourné
 A dolour et à grieté,
 Quant je ai si mal parti
 Qu'il me faut cont[re] mon gré, 20
 Par droite necessité,
 De corps eslongier cheli
 A qui m'otroi sans folour,
 Et sans estre a voée [supply lui?]
 De coer; mais c'est vains labours,
 Car tant ne doit estre amée
 Foelle con la flours.

Or m'ont amours assené;
 Mais, si c'à leur volenté,
 Est mieuls qu'il n'affier à mi. 30
 Tous jours doi av[oir] fondé.
 Mon desir sur loiaulté,
 En espoir d'amour garni.
 Car tout passe de valour,
 Chus dont s[ui en] amourée,
 D'un si gratieux retour.
 Sage doi estre avisée,
 Se j'ai chier m'onnour.

M. Boucherie's comment on this poem is as follows (p. 313):

Dans *l'Honneur et l'Amour*, vrai bijou de versification, la femme aimée se résigne, non sans lutte, à tenir "éloigné de son corps" celui qu'elle préfère. Sans doute l'effort est pénible, mais elle doit mettre l'honneur au-dessus de l'amour, "car," dit-elle avec un rare bonheur d'expression,

"Car tant ne doit estre amée
 Foelle con la flours."

This implied connection of the leaf with love, the flower with honor, is rather puzzling,¹ and I have not found anything like it

¹ Another possible interpretation seems to be that this mistress, plain in comparison with another, cannot expect to be loved like the other, the flower.

elsewhere. Whatever the precise origin and meaning of the comparison, however, there does not appear to be reference to any such thing as the later strife of the Flower and the Leaf. The poem is of interest only because of this early setting-off of the one against the other.

In a great many other cases there is mention of flowers and leaves together;¹ but they are merely part of the natural background, and the juxtaposition seems without significance. The only example worth quoting is from Lydgate's *Reson and Sensualyte*,² ll. 3900-2, about the trees in the garden of Deduit, which nature sustains:

Ay tendre, fresh, and grene,
Ageyn thassaut of al[le] shours
Both of levys and of flours.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF

Reference to the characteristics of the flower and the leaf that are emphasized in our poem—the perishable nature of the one and the comparative permanence of the other—is frequently found.

Thus in a chanson of Gonthier de Soignies, of the thirteenth century, we are told that

Pucele est con flors de rose,
Qui tost vient et tost trespasse.³

In Jean de Condé's *Dis de l'Entendement*:

eürs del monde et richesce
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
Ressamble la flour qui tost sesce
Et poi en sa biauté demeure,
Qu'ele chiet et faut en une heure.⁴

¹ As, for example, in Mahn, *Gedichte der Troubadours*, Nos. lxxiii-iv, ciii, ccii, ccxxi, ccxxviii, cclxxxiii, ccccxv, dxxiv, dlxiv, dxcv, etc. The list might be greatly prolonged, if necessary, from nearly all kinds of mediæval poetry in various languages.

² Ed. Sieper, E. E. T. S. (1901-3).

³ *Trouvères Belges* (Nouvelle Série), ed. A. Scheler (Louvain, 1879), p. 29, ll. 43, 44.

⁴ *Dits et contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son Fils Jean de Condé*, ed. Scheler (Bruxelles, 1866-67), Vol. III, p. 92, ll. 1417 ff.

Lydgate several times comments on the transitoriness of the flower in a way that strikingly suggests *F. L.* Thus in *Beware of Doubteness*¹ he declares ironically that because

these fresshe somer-floures
Whyte and rede, blewe and grene,
Ben sodainly, with winter-shoures,
Mad feinte and fade, withoute wene,

therefore there is no trust or steadfastness in anything but women. Another ballade of Lydgate's has the refrain:

All stant on chaunge like a mydsomer rose;²

in still another he describes how "Alcestis flour" "in stormys dreepithe;"³ and in *R. S.* beauty is compared to a rose that fades with a storm.⁴ In Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*⁵ is the line:

Nocht is your fairnes bot ane faiding flour.

Other references could be made, were an exhaustive list necessary.

On the other hand, the enduring quality of certain kinds of leaves, including the laurel, the oak, and the hawthorn, is made prominent in Chaucer's *P. F.*, ll. 173 ff., and in Lydgate's *T. G.*,⁶ ll. 503-16. In the latter passage a beautiful lady is advised to be "unchanging like these leaves [hawthorn], which no storm can kill."

It should also be noted that in *R. R.*, buds are preferred to blown roses because of their greater durability⁷—a reason sufficiently similar to that for the preference of leaf over flower to be of interest.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF AS SYMBOLS

The use of the flower and the leaf as symbols is paralleled in a rather interesting way in Christine de Pisan's *Dit de la Rose*,⁸ which tells of the formation of the "Ordre de la Rose" for the purpose of guarding "la bonne renommée . . . de dames en toute chose." This poem is, as the editor says,⁹ "en quelque

¹ *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 291 ff.

² *M. P.*, ed. Halliwell, Percy Society, Vol. II (1840), pp. 22 ff.

³ *M. P.*, p. 161.

⁴ Ll. 6210-16.

⁵ *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 327 ff., l. 461.

⁶ Ed. Schick, E. E. T. S., 1891.

⁷ Ll. 1653 ff., Vol. I, p. 54, Michel ed.

⁸ *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. Roy (Société des Anciens Textes Français), Vol. II, pp. 29 ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. x.

sort le couronnement de la polémique de Christine contre l'œuvre de Jean de Meun” in satire of woman. The order is formed at the suggestion of the “dame et deesse de Loyauté” (ll. 90, 91), who comes directly from the God of Love. The symbolism of the flower is more like that of the leaf in our poem, for the poet is the friend of Diana (l. 279). The rose is evidently chosen because of the controversy relating to *R. R.*, and there is no reference to any symbolism previously attached to that or any other flower.

Mention should also be made, in this connection, of the well-known *Jeux Floraux* of Toulouse, established in 1324 by seven Provençal troubadours, for the purpose of fostering the “gay science” of poetry. Though it is possible that the author of *F. L.* had never even heard of this southern organization, the name, the floral emblems given to winners of prizes, and the date each year on which the *jeux* occurred—May 3—are all of interest as evidence of the way in which flowers were used as symbols in connection with observances of the springtime.

THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ALLEGORY

The contrast between the adherents of the Leaf and of the Flower in our poem is not quite clear-cut. Too many different sorts of people are included in the company of the Leaf, and the characterization of the company of the Flower is too general. Yet the dominant ideas—serious achievement and steadfastness on the one hand, idleness and frivolity on the other—are plain enough, and are expressed elsewhere in ways of some interest to us.

Thus it is of value to examine somewhat in detail the plan and purpose of *Le livre des cent-ballades*.¹ A young man, riding between Pont-de-Cé and Angers, meets an old man, who, suspecting the young man of being a lover, asks him whether he intends always to be loyal in love and brave in war, and to observe the rules of French chivalry. The young man promises, and pursues his journey till he meets a company of young knights and ladies disporting in a meadow watered by the Loire. He avoids the crowd and proceeds to the river-bank to watch the fish; but

¹ Ed. de Queux de Saint Hilaire (Paris, 1868).

is perceived by one of the youngest and merriest ladies of the company, who seeks him out and unasked gives "conseils d'amour léger, d'amour volage, bien différents des austères et vigoureuses leçons qui vient de lui donner le vieux chevalier."¹ The young man says he prefers to be loyal, and, in answer to the lady's question where he received such advice, tells her of the old man whom he had met. She proposes then that they submit to certain chevaliers renowned both in love and war the question:

Qui plus grant
Joie donne & plus entière,
Loiauté, ou faux semblant
En amant.

He prefers to make the issue squarely as to the relative value or success in love of loyalty or falsity; but she demands that they ask of the judges only if they think—

Qu'estre secret & plaisant,
Pourchâçant
En mains lieux joie plénière,
Ne soit fait de vray amant.

The terms are finally agreed upon, and the question is submitted, with the result that nine out of twelve answers received, purporting to come from some of the most famous men of the time (not far from 1390), favor loyalty.

There is, to be sure, in the foregoing no mention of regular orders, with symbolic attire and decorations, and the strife is more specific and narrower in range than that of *F. L.*; but the resemblance is noteworthy nevertheless. As Professor Neilson says: "In this book we have very clearly opposed two different ideals of love,"² the old ideal of Ovid and his imitators, and a newer and nobler ideal not so frequently expressed. Such a contrast is suggested, however, in the nightingale's complaint of the degeneracy of love in *Fablel* and *Venus*,³ and was definitely made long before the latter part of the fourteenth century; for instance, in a Provençal poem mentioned by Professor Rajna,⁴ in which we find "l'Amor Fino o Verace, antagonista dell' Amor Falso."

¹ Editor's Introduction, p. viii.

³ P. 162 below.

² *Harvard Studies*, Vol. VI, p. 198.

⁴ *Le corti d'amore* (Milano, 1890), p. 23.

The conflict in *F. L.*, however, is not primarily or chiefly a love conflict. In some ways it more closely resembles that between Reason and Sensuality in Lydgate's amplification of *Les Echees Amoureux*,¹ chiefly because Sensuality causes men to be

Ful of plesaunce and fals delyte (801)
And of fleshly appetyte.

Still more interesting, in the same poem, is the rivalry of Diana and Venus. The poet meets the former in her evergreen forest of chastity. She is clad in white, ornamented with pearls, and wears a golden crown. She bewails the change from the days when she was more highly regarded than Venus, and love was pure and faithful. She particularly detests "Ydelnesse," the porter of the garden of Deduit, Venus' son; and warns the poet at great length against the idle pleasures of this garden. In almost every way² the subjects of Venus and Cupid in the garden of Deduit resemble the frivolous company of the Flower. And though Diana has no company here, she bewails the loss of followers who either in chastity or steadfastness were like some of the groups in the company of the Leaf. Practically the only inconsistency is that Diana, as in classical mythology, spends her time hunting (to avoid idleness, she says, l. 3000); whereas in *F. L.* excessive love of hunting is one of the things condemned. The pleasures of the garden of Deduit, to be sure, do not differ materially from pleasures described in *R. R.* and other poems of its class; but there is nowhere else, so far as I have discovered, so important a contrast of the two ways of life contrasted in *F. L.*

ORDERS IN THE AMOROUS LAW

The fact that this conflict between two ways of life is attached, in *F. L.*, to orders mentioned by Deschamps as of the "amorous law," requires little comment. The origin and characteristics of this law have received such detailed treatment that repetition is unnecessary.³ Suffice it to say that during the Middle Ages there

¹ *R. S.*, ed. Sieper.

² See more detailed analysis in chap. iii below.

³ See especially P. Rajna, *Le corti d'amore* (Milano, 1890); E. Trojel, *Andreae Capellani Regii Francorum de Amore* (Copenhagen, 1892); J. F. Rowbotham, *The Troubadours and Courts of Love* (London, 1895); L. F. Mott, *The System of Courtly Love* (Boston, 1896); W. A. Neilson, *Harvard Studies*, Vol. VI; and various references given in the books just named.

did grow up—whether in actual practice or poetic fancy—an elaborate system of courtly love, formulated and celebrated in a long series of poems, with which ours is connected, not only by “the landscape, the costuming, and the rôle of the queens,”¹ but also by the fact that the Orders of the Flower and the Leaf were orders in the amorous law.² Mention has already been made of a slightly similar order of which a flower is used as the symbol.³ This “Ordre de la Rose” may have been only a poetical fancy; but in 1399 an “Ordre de la Dame Blanche à l’Escu Verd” was actually formed,⁴ and there is interesting record of a “Cour Amoureuse” of 1400.⁵

It is conceivable that the Orders of the Flower and the Leaf did not actually exist, since literary influence may account for all definite mention we have of them. Chaucer and Deschamps knew some, at least, of each other’s writings,⁶ and Charles d’Orleans and the author of *F. L.* in all probability knew both Chaucer and Deschamps. Yet the manner in which all the writers speak of the contrasted orders is hard to reconcile with anything but their actual existence in connection with the observance of May Day. Chaucer’s reference, as already pointed out,⁷ seems to imply that the orders were not very old when he was writing the Prologue to *L. G. W.* (about 1385–86). Deschamps, too, writing about the same time, says, “I have heard of two orders,” etc.;⁸ as if the information had recently come to him. Charles d’Orleans’ *Poème de la prison* cannot be later than 1440, and his reference to the Orders of the Flower and the Leaf is probably due to the recollection of May Day festivities in France before he was imprisoned in 1415. *F. L.* can hardly be dated later than 1450, and the various facts to be observed as to its apparent relations with early poems of Lydgate⁹ incline me to favor a somewhat early date. Thus it seems probable that Orders of the Flower and the Leaf existed as a part of the observance of May Day, according to the “amorous law,” in portions of both France and England, some

¹ Neilson, p. 150.

² Deschamps’ Ballade II, p. 127 above.

³ P. 138 above.

⁴ To be discussed below, p. 153.

⁵ See A. Piaget, in *Romania*, Vol. XX, pp. 417 ff.; Vol. XXXI, pp. 597 ff.

⁶ See the articles of Kittredge and Lowes previously cited, p. 124 above.

⁷ P. 125 above.

⁸ Ballade II, p. 127 above.

⁹ See especially chap. iii below.

time during the period beginning not long before 1385 and ending before the middle of the following century. It is hardly probable that the orders were very important, however, or there would have been more frequent mention of them than we find.

CHAPTER II. THE ACCESSORIES OF THE ALLEGORY

A number of the details of *F. L.*, as to costumes, chaplets, birds, trees, and so forth, are clearly symbolic in relation to the central allegory.

THE COSTUMES—WHITE AND GREEN

The costumes are, we have noted, white and green—white for the adherents of the Leaf, green for the adherents of the Flower. At first this reversal of an apparently natural choice may seem strange, for the daisy—the flower here worshiped—is white, and the leaf is green; but when we remember that white is proverbially (and most naturally) the color of purity, the white attire of the chaste followers of the Leaf is at once seen to be appropriate.

The use of white as symbolic of purity is so common as scarcely to need comment: Thus Beatrice, when Dante sees her at the age of eighteen, is attired in white, "the hue of Faith and Purity."¹ Deschamps mentions the traditional interpretation of the color in his *Lay de Franchise*, l. 36, and his *Éloge d'une dame du nom de Marguerite*.² Christine de Pisan, in her *Dit de la Rose*,³ and Lydgate, in *R. S.*,⁴ represent Diana as clothed in white—Diana the goddess of purity and leader of the company of the Leaf. Especially interesting in this connection is another poem by Lydgate—*Pur le Roy*,⁵ an account of the entry of Henry VI into London in 1432, after his coronation in France.

The citezens eche one of the citee,
In her entent that thei were pure and clene,
Chees hem of white a full fayre lyveré,
In every craft as it whas welle sene;

¹ Gardner, *Dante Primer* (1900), p. 46.

² *Œuvres*, Vol. II, pp. 203 ff.; Vol. III, pp. 379, 380, l. 7.

³ *Œuvres poétiques*, Vol. II, pp. 29 ff., ll. 279-81.

⁴ Ll. 2816, 2822-24.

⁵ *M. P.*, ed. Halliwell, pp. 1 ff. The same event is described in the *Chronicles*; see especially Gregory's, ed. Gairdner, *Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century* (Camden Society, 1876), pp. 173 ff.

To shew the trouthe that they did mene
Toward the Kyng, had made hem feithefully,
In sonderly devise embroudered richely.¹

On the bridge a tower was erected, from which issued three ladies representing Nature, Grace, and Fortune. On each side of these ladies were seven maidens—

Alle clad in white, in tokyn of clennes,
Lyke pure virginis as in ther ententis.²

But purity is not the only meaning attached by mediæval poets to white. The appropriateness of the color for the Nine Worthies, the *Douze Pairs*, the Knights of the Round Table and of the Garter,³ is indicated in the following lines from Watriquet de Couvin's *Dis des .VIII. Couleurs*:

Cils autres cuers de coragour, (206)
Cils visages simples dehors,
Qui n'espargne force ne cors
A biaux fais d'armes commencier,
Cils qui onques ne volt tencier
A honour, aiuz le quiert touz diz
Simples est et douz et hardiz:
Il portera par sa samblance
L'argentée couleur très blanche,
Qui nous moustre en humilité
Hardye debonnaireté,
Aspreté, travail à suour,
Et crierà par grant vigour
.I. cri courtois et deduisant:
"Clarté, clarté, du roy luisant!"⁴

A third symbolic meaning is given to white by Guillaume de Machaut, in his *Rémède de Fortune*,⁵ where we are told that the color signifies joy. A woman in white called Joye-sanz-fin appears in a poem attributed to Deschamps,⁶ who was, it will be remembered, a pupil of Machaut. Connected perhaps with this

¹ I emend Halliwell's bad punctuation.

² It seems worthy of note, by the way, that these virgins sang "Most aungelyk with hevenly armony" (p. 10). Cf. *F. L.*, 131-33.

³ *F. L.*, 504, 515, 516, 519.

⁴ *Dits* de Watriquet de Couvin, ed. Scheler (Bruxelles, 1868), pp. 311 ff.

⁵ *Œuvres choisies*, ed. Tarbé (Paris, 1849), pp. 83 ff.

⁶ *Œuvres* de Deschamps, ed. Raynaud, Vol. X, p. lxxxii.

interpretation are two references in Gaston Paris' collection of *Chansons du XV^{me} siècle*.¹ In chanson XLII the poet says he is too sad to sing—

Quant le Vaudevire est jus
Qui souloit estre jouyeulx,
Et blanche livrée porter,
Chascun ung blanc chapperon,²
Tout par bonne intencion
Noblement sans mal penser.

Somewhat similarly, in chanson LVI, Olivier Bachelin is addressed in the following terms:

Vous soulliés gaiment chanter
Et demener jouyeuse vie,
Et la blanche livrée porter
Par la pais de Normandie.

This “blanche livrée” was apparently the sign of some organization, but the editor of the *Chansons* gives no definite information about it. As Bachelin was the fifteenth-century Norman poet who wrote convivial songs called by the name of the valley (Vaudevire) where he lived, it seems hardly likely that the wearing of white livery in his time and by his merry companions has any relation to the wearing of white by the followers of the Leaf, in spite of the fact that ll. 11 and 12 of chanson XLII may reasonably be taken to imply either purity or steadfastness, or both. These chansons were probably later than *F. L.*, however, so that they interfere in no way with the conclusion that the use of white in our poem was entirely in accord with traditions prevalent at the time it was written.

There is abundant evidence that white was associated with the amorous law and its festivities. Thus in G. Villani's *Cronica*³ there is mention of the appearance—in Florence, June, 1283—of “una compagnia . . . di mille uomini o più, tutti vestiti di robe

¹ Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1875.

² In this connection may be mentioned Froissart's account of the “blans chaperons” of Ghent, 1379 (*Chroniques*, chaps. cccxlviii ff.; Berners' translation). I see no reason for suspecting any relation between these two kinds of “white hats,” but they indicate how much was made of details of livery or uniform, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

³ Libro VII, cap. lxxxix; *Biblioteca classica italiana*, Secolo XIV, No. 21 (Trieste, 1857), Vol. I, p. 148.

bianche con uno signore detto dell' Amore." Similarly, in May, 1290, "more than a thousand persons, dressed in white, paraded the streets [of Florence again], guided by the 'Lord of Love.'"¹ In Jean de Condé's *Messe des Oisiaus*² white-clad canoneses present a love suit before Venus; and in Gower's *C. A.*³ a company of servants of love ride white horses and are clad in white and blue (the latter the regular color of constancy). In a popular chanson⁴ "la belle au jardin d'amour" is in white. Moreover, in a number of other cases, to be mentioned hereafter,⁵ white is associated with green in connection with love observances of various kinds.

These love observances took place most commonly during the month of May, in connection with more general celebrations of the return of spring, with which also white was sometimes associated, though, as will be seen shortly, far less frequently than green. One of Gower's French ballades,⁶ for instance, contains mention of the "blanche banere" of May. There is record of the custom, in Provence, on the first of May, of choosing "de jolies petites filles qu'on habille de blanc On l'appelle le *mayo*."⁷ Mannhardt⁸ also mentions the wearing of white costumes at May Day celebrations in various parts of Europe. The specific examples he gives are doubtless of a time much later than *F. L.*, but such customs are generally traditional and may be of very great antiquity.

As to the fundamental interpretation of green there is direct conflict: it means constancy and it means inconstancy. Deschamps, in his *Lay de Franchise* and in two ballades, "L'Ascension est la fête des dames" and "Éloge d'une dame du nom de Marguerite,"⁹ says green is the color of "fermeté" or of "seurté." In two of these cases, however, he is complimenting a woman represented as a daisy, and naturally has to give a complimentary meaning to

¹ Gardner, *Dante Primer*, p. 13.

² *Dits et contes*, Vol. III, pp. 1 ff.

³ Book IV, ll. 1305 ff. See further discussion of the story of Rosiphele, p. 166 below.

⁴ *Romania*, Vol. VII, p. 61.

⁵ Pp. 152, 153 below.

⁶ *Complete Works*, ed. Macaulay, Vol. I, p. 367, ballade xxxvii.

⁷ DeNore, *Coutumes, mythes et traditions des provinces de France* (Paris, 1846); quoted in deGubernatis, *La mythologie des plantes* (Paris, 1878-82), Vol. I, p. 227. See also Chambers' *Book of Days*, Vol. I, p. 579.

⁸ *Der Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme* (Berlin, 1875), p. 344.

⁹ *Œuvres*, Vol. II, pp. 203 ff., l. 35; Vol. III, pp. 307, 379.

the green stalk. In another ballade he writes more conventionally of blue as the color of “loyauté.”¹ Yet there is evidence that his idea was not exceptional. For example, in a Middle English version of *Le Chastel d'Amour* are the following lines:

The grene colour bi the ground that wil so wele laste (403)
Is the treuthe of oure ladye that ay was stedefast;²

in the *Castle of Perseverance* Truth is represented as wearing a “sad-coloured green;”³ and in Lydgate’s *Edmund and Fremund*⁴ we find the lines:

The wattry greene shewed in the Reynbowe
Off chastite disclosed his clenness.

Moreover, Chaucer has Alceste, the type of faithfulness, “clad in real habit grene,”⁵ and even Diana’s statue in the *Knight’s Tale*⁶ clothed “in gaude greene”—doubtless because she was a huntress.

The foregoing interpretation, however, is exceptional, and in most cases can be accounted for, as intimated, by special reasons governing each particular poem. By far the commoner meaning of green was inconstancy. For example, Machaut has a ballade with the refrain:

Au lieu de bleu se vestir de vert;⁷

and in his *Rémède de Fortune*,⁸ “vers” is said to signify “nouvelleté.” Chaucer makes similar use of the color in the *Squire’s Tale*;⁹ and Lydgate in the following lines of the *Falls of Princes*:

Watchet-blewe of feyned stedfastnes, . . .
Meint with light grene, for change and doublenes.¹⁰

¹ *Œuvres*, Vol. X, p. lix.

² Robert Grosseteste’s *Chastel d’Amour* (*Castel of Love*), ed. Hupe; *Anglia*, Vol. XIV, pp. 415 ff.

³ See Schick’s note on l. 299 of Lydgate’s *T. G.*

⁴ In Horstmann’s *Altenglische Legenden*, Neue Folge (Heilbronn, 1891), pp. 376 ff.; part III, ll. 115, 116.

⁵ *L. G. W.*, Prologue B, l. 214. Alceste, it should be remembered, is a personification of the daisy, and the green habit represents the green stalk of the flower. Similarly in the *Second Nun’s Prologue* (*C. T.*, G, 90), “green of conscience” is to be explained by the comparison with a lily.

⁶ *C. T.*, A, l. 2079.

⁷ *Œuvres choisies*, ed. Tarbé, pp. 55, 56. This poem is the original of Chaucer’s *Ballade of Neue-Fangelnesse*, with its refrain,

In stede of blew, thus may ye were al grene. (Oxford Chaucer, Vol. I, p. 409.)

⁸ Tarbé, p. 84.

⁹ *C. T.*, F, ll. 646, 647.

¹⁰ Quoted by Professor Skeat in his note on Chaucer’s *Anelida and Arcite*, l. 330 (Oxford Chaucer, Vol. I, p. 538); and by Professor Schick in the note referred to above, n. 3.

In *A. G.*,¹ too, Fortune's gown

was of gawdy grene chamelet
Chaungeable of sondry dyuerse coloures
To the condycyone accordyng of hyr shoures.

The use of green as an unlucky color in some of the *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*² is in harmony with the foregoing interpretation. The following lines, quoted by Child from William Black's *Three Feathers*, are of interest:

Oh green's forsaken,³
And yellow's forsworn,
And blue's the sweetest
Color that's worn.

A third meaning of green—not inconsistent with inconstancy, however—is given in the following passage from Watrquet de Couvin's *Dit des .VIII. Couleurs*:⁴

Car couleurs verde senefie (227)
Maniere cointe et envoisie:
Affaitiez, cortois et mignos
Et chantans comme uns roussignos,
Ne ne doit fais d'armes douter,
Que qu'il li doie au cors couster,
Mais qu'il puist sa force employer
Par jouter et par tornoier,
Et criera ce joli cri:
"Verdure au riche roy joli!"

A similar interpretation is contained in the following lines from Barclay:

Mine habite blacke accordeth not with grene,
Blacke betokeneth death as it is dayly sene;
The grene is pleasour, freshe lust and iolite;
These two in nature hath great diuersitie.⁵

¹ Ed. Triggs (E. E. T. S., 1895), ll. 320-22.

² Ed. Child, Vol. II, pp. 181 ff., 512. It should be added, however, that in the great majority of cases in which green is mentioned in the ballads, no ill luck is implied. Green garments are very common—more common than any other kind. Some special uses of them will be mentioned below, pp. 149-52. In numerous other instances not mentioned, the color seems to be used simply because it is bright and pretty.

³ It may be mentioned that in Elizabethan times to "give a woman a green gown" implied loss of chastity. See the *New English Dictionary*, under "Green."

⁴ Already referred to, p. 144 above, n. 4.

Prologue to *Egloges*, Spenser Society (1885), p. 2.

This passage is, of course, considerably later than *F. L.*; but a parallel contrast between black and green is implied by Lydgate's representation of himself, on a pilgrimage, as

In a cope of blacke, and not of grene.¹

In the ballads there is frequent mention of the “gay green,”² and the association of the color with the festivities of spring³ is in harmony with this interpretation.

Another use of green is as the color of hope,⁴ in *L'Amant Rendu Cordelier à l'Observance d'Amours*⁵—a meaning also given (along with others) in a passage quoted by Schick from Kindermann's *Teutscher Wolredner*.⁶ A similar idea seems to be at the bottom of the following lines from *La Panthère d'Amours*, by Nicole de Margival:⁷

Amans donques, qui l'esperance
De l'esmeraude et la puissance
Veult avoir, il doit estre vers, (1310)
C'est a dire qu'il ait devers
Ceulz qui bien aiment bon corage,
Et si doit metre son usage
En ceulz ensuivre et congnoistre
Qui se peinent d'amors acroistre;
Car les vers choses tousjors croissent,
Et les seches tousjors descroissent;
Et cil qui en verdeur se tiennent
A grace si tres grant en viennent (1320)
Que des bons, des biaux et des gens
Sont loé, et de toutes gens.

Such are the somewhat confusing interpretations of green that I have found—constancy, inconstancy, pleasure, hope.⁸ In a far

¹ Prologue to *Thebes*; text consulted, Chalmers' *English Poets*, Vol. I, p. 571.

² See Child, ballads 64 A, stanza 19; 125, stanzas 23, 35; 132, stanzas 3, 4, etc.

³ See pp. 150-53 below.

⁴ White also appears as the color of hope in various Dutch poems. See Seelmann's “Farbentracht,” *Jahrbuch des Vereins für niederdeutsche Sprachforschung*, Vol. XXVIII (1902), pp. 118 ff.

⁵ Attributed to Martial d'Auvergne; ed. Montaignon, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1881. See note on p. 111 of this edition. The poem is also found in *Les Arrêts d'Amours*, ed. Lenglet-Dufresnay (Amsterdam, 1731).

⁶ In the note already referred to, p. 147 above, n. 3.

⁷ Ed. Todd, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1883.

⁸ Professor Brandl (in Paul's *Grundriss*, Vol. II, p. 663) mentions yet another meaning, in *Gawain and the Green Knight*—“die grüne Farbe des Friedens.” This poem, however, seems to have no possible relation to *F. L.*

greater number of cases no specific meaning is given, but the color is associated with the light and frivolous pleasures of springtime and courtly love.¹ In astrology green was the color of Venus, and Venus was generally connected, as in the Tannhäuser legend, with the baser sort of love. Naturally, also, green costumes were worn at the festivities of May Day, in celebration of the renewal of nature's green. The following list will indicate how thoroughly in accord with tradition were the green costumes of the company of the Flower:

In *R. R.*, Oiseuse ("Ydelnesse"), who conducts the lover to the garden of Deduit, wears a dress of green; see l. 573 of the English version attributed to Chaucer.

The passage from *La Panthère d'Amours*, quoted on p. 149 above, associates the emerald and green with love.

A company of famous lovers in Froissart's *Paradys d'Amour* (see chap. iii below) are all clad in green.

In Deschamps' *Lay de Franchise* (ref. p. 143 above) a party of young men cutting foliage in observance of May are likewise "vestus de vert." See also ballade IV, p. 129 above, l. 35.

A ballade of Christine de Pisan (*Œuvres*, Vol. I, p. 217), calling on lovers to rise and be joyful on May Day, contains the following lines:

Vestir de vert pour joye parfurnir,
A feste aler se dame le mandoit.

A lean chevalier, reciting the pains and troubles of lovers in Alain Chartier's *Debat des deux Fortunes d'Amours* (*Œuvres*, ed. DuChesne [Paris, 1617], p. 570), says that they often wear "cœur noircey . . . soubz robbe verte."

In the note already mentioned, on p. 111 of *L'Amant Rendu Corde-lier à l'Observance d'Amours*, the following lines from Charles d'Orleans and Bertrand des Marins are quoted:

Le verd je ne veux plus porter, [Charles d'Orleans]
Que est livrée aux amoureux.

La couleur verde est demonstrant [Bertrand des Marins
Des femmes la plaisante face, de Masan in *Rousier*
Leur mine, aussi leur beau semblant, *des Dames*
Dont maint estime estre en leur grace.

In the Prologue to *Les Arrêts d'Amours*, by Martial d'Auvergne, "les déesses, . . . legistes, et clergesses qui sçavoient le decret par cœur," are all clad in green. This singular volume of burlesque decrees

¹The signification of green in the Dutch poems studied by Seelmann (n. 4, p. 149 above) is "Anfang de Liebe."

contains many other allusions to garments and decorations of green; most of them without significance, except as they show the great popularity of the color and its common association with the affairs of love.

In chanson XLIX (*Chansons du XV^{me} siècle*, ed. Paris); green is said to be the livery of lovers.

Chaucer's Alceste, who, as we have noted (p. 147 above), is clad in green, is led upon the scene by the King of Love, and represents in appearance a daisy, the flower which the green-clad followers of the Flower particularly worship. See *L. G. W.*, text B, ll. 213, 242, 303, 341.

Isis, in *A. G.*, (ll. 332-34), wears a gown “grene as any gresse in the somertyde.”

Venus, in Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* (l. 221; *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, p. 334), is dressed in green and black.

Malory describes a “maying of Arthur's knights, all clad in green.”

Rosiall and Lust, in *C. L.* (ll. 816, 1059; *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 431, 437), are clad in green.

In the May eclogue of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, “love-lads . . . girt in gawdy greene” are mentioned; and Lechery is given a green gown in *The Faerie Queene* (I, iv, 25).

In Stubbes' *Anatomie of Abuses* (ed. Furnivall, New Shakspeare Society, 1877-79, p. 147) we are told of the followers of the Lord of Misrule, clad in “liveries of greene, yellow, or some other light wanton color.”

Shakspeare, in *Love's Labour's Lost* (I, ii, 90), mentions green as “the colour of lovers.”

Green also was frequently associated with fairies and other supernatural creatures. In the ballad of Thomas Rhymer,¹ for instance, the queen of Elfland is attired in green. “The Wee Wee Man”² calls up a vision of twenty-four ladies in green, who dance “jimp and sma.” A mermaid in green entices Clerk Colvill away from his “gay ladie.”³ And—to go somewhat afield into folklore—Mannhardt⁴ writes at great length of “Waldgeister” of various kinds clad in green.

Another extremely popular mediæval use of green was in connection with forestry and hunting.⁵ Robin Hood and his men regularly wore suits of green, and other “merry men,” out-

¹ Child, ballad 37, Vol. I, pp. 323-26.

³ *Ibid.*, 42, Vol. I, pp. 387-89.

² *Ibid.*, 38, Vol. I, pp. 330-33.

⁴ *Der Baumkultus*, pp. 111, 117, etc.

⁵ Explained in an interesting way in the following passage, quoted in the *New English Dictionary* (under “Green”) from Trevisa's translation of Bartholemew de Glanville's *De Proprietatibus Rerum*: “Hunters clothe themselves in grene for the beest louth kyndely grene colours.”

laws, and hunters in the ballads are similarly clad.¹ Chaucer's yeoman, too, "was clad in cote and hood of grene;"² and Emily, in the *Knight's Tale*,³ wears a green gown on the May morning when she goes forth with Theseus and his company to hunt. According to an old proverb,

The first of May
Is Robin Hood's day;

and at least as early as the fifteenth century Robin Hood and his men were associated in England with the May games.⁴ Thus, since it is undue love of hunting and hawking and playing in meads that is specifically condemned in the followers of the Flower, their green costumes may possibly be accounted for without going away from England.

Thus far we have been examining cases of the use of white and green separately, where a symbolic meaning is attached to the colors or implied by the context. Many more examples might doubtless be found,⁵ as mediæval poetry is full of details about costumes, and the colors in question were exceptionally popular. But it seems sufficient to conclude with a few important instances of the use of the two colors together.

At the ceremonies after the coronation of Charles VI of France, in 1380, "ceux de la ville de Paris allerent au devant de luy bien deux milles personnes vestus tout un, c'est a sçavoir de robes my-partis de vert et de blanc."⁶ Even though in this narrative no specific significance is attached to the colors, the circumstance is of interest. Much more important, however, is the use of the colors in Christine de Pisan's *Duc des Vrais Amans*,⁷ where on

¹ See Child, "Robin Hood Ballads," *passim*, Vol. III; also ballads 73 D, stanza 11; 107 A, stanzas 25, 30, 76; 305 A, stanzas 19, 32. Of course, a very much longer list could be made, were it necessary to be exhaustive. See, for instance, *Ipomedon*, ed. Kölbing, l. 657.

² *C. T.*, A, l. 103.

³ *Ibid.*, l. 1686.

⁴ See the accounts of May games in Strutt's *Sport and Pastimes*, Book IV, chap. iii, secs. xv-xx; Strutt's romance, *Queenhoo-Hall*, sec. i; Hone's *Every-Day Book*, Vol. I, pp. 269 ff.; Vol. II, pp. 284 ff.; Hone's *Table Book*, pp. 271 ff.; Hone's *Year Book*, pp. 257 ff.; Brand's *Popular Antiquities*; Mannhardt's *Baumkultus*, pp. 160 ff.; Chambers' *Book of Days*, Vol. I, pp. 571 ff.

⁵ For instance, in the romances, which I have not examined with this matter especially in view.

⁶ Quoted from Jean des Ursins, "Histoire de Charles VI," in *Memoirs pour servir à l'histoire de la France*, Vol. II, p. 342.

⁷ *Œuvres*, Vol. III, pp. 59 ff. The poem will be analyzed somewhat in detail in chap. iii, below.

one day knights clad in white joust before ladies in white, and on the next day both knights and ladies are clad in green. Here also no significance is attached to the colors, and the same persons wear the different costumes on different days; yet there is enough similarity in the attendant circumstances—the jousting; the order in which the colors appear; the attention to details about armor, harness, precious stones, gold embroidery, and so forth—to justify a strong suspicion that the author of *F. L.* knew the French woman’s poem. Christine de Pisan makes a good deal of account of the “Ordre de la Dame Blanche à l’Escu Verd,” which was formed by the famous Marechal Boucicault in 1399,¹ for the protection of women. The emblem of the order was “une targe d’or esmaillié de verd, à tout une dame blanche dedans.” It seems reasonable to believe that the “dame blanche” represented the purity which the knights of the order were to protect; what the green background signified is not so clear.

That white and green were sometimes associated together in connection with the observances of May is shown by an account, in Hall’s Chronicle,² of a “maying” of Henry VIII, in which the company were clad in green on one occasion and in white on another. In Machyn’s *Diary*,³ too, there is mention of a white and green May pole, around which danced a company of men and women wearing “baldrykes” of white and green.

The conclusion, then, as to colors, is that the use of white and green in *F. L.* is substantially in accordance with tradition. White regularly signifies purity, and is associated with martial prowess and joy; the wearers of white in our poem are famous warriors, pure women, and steadfast lovers. Green is inconsistently interpreted; but in actual use is most often associated with pleasures of the lighter sort for which the followers of the Flower are condemned.

CHAPLETS OF LEAVES AND OF FLOWERS

The wearing of chaplets, whether of leaves or flowers, was a regular feature of the observance of May Day and other medi-

¹ See *Memoirs pour servir à l’histoire de la France*, Vol. II, pp. 209, 255; C. de Pisan’s *Œuvres*, Vol. I, pp. 208, 210, 220, 302, 303, etc.

² 1809 ed., pp. 515, 520; quoted by Mannhardt, p. 368.

³ Ed. Nichols (Camden Society, 1848), p. 20.

æval outdoor festivities of the spring and summer.¹ In *F. L.* this practice is used to distinguish the parties further by giving chaplets of leaves to the company of the Leaf; of flowers, to the company of the Flower.

Laurel wreaths, as it seems hardly necessary to say, were frequently used from very early times as tokens of honor. Apollo was often represented with a crown of laurel, "comme dieu qui purifie, qui illumine, et qui triomphe."² Chaucer presents Theseus

With laurer crowned as a conquerour.³

Christine de Pisan has a ballade on men "digne d'estre de lorier couronné."⁴ Lydgate represents St. Margaret as crowned with laurel,⁵ and in *A. G.*, l. 791, Virtue is crowned with laurel. Thus it is in accordance with a very common conventionality that in *F. L.* laurel wreaths are given to the Nine Worthies, and those that were "hardy" and "wan victorious name."⁶

Woodbine is worn by those that

never were (485)
To love untrew in word, ne thought, ne dede,
But ay stedfast.

A significance like this is attached by Lydgate to hawthorn;⁷ and both Chaucer and the author of *F. L.* mention woodbine and hawthorn together.⁸ The latter especially was very popular during the Middle Ages, and generally associated with the festivities of May. Hawthorn branches were used in "planting the May," and the hawthorn blossom was often called "the May."⁹ The special appropriateness of hawthorn for the adherents of the Leaf is indicated in the following passages:

¹ The examples cited of the different kinds of chaplets will furnish sufficient evidence of the prevalence of the custom. Reference may be made, however, to *R. R.*, ed. Michel, Vol. I, pp. 247, 248, note; and to Hinstorff's dissertation on *Kulturgeschichtliches im "Roman de l'Escoufle" und im "Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole"* (Darmstadt, 1896). See also the authorities cited on p. 152 above, n. 4.

² Gubernatis, *Mythologie des plantes*, Vol. II, p. 193.

³ *C. T.*, A, l. 1027.

⁴ *Œuvres*, Vol. I, p. 2.

⁵ "Life of St. Margarete," Horstmann's *Altenglische Legenden*, Neue Folge (Heilbronn, 1881), pp. 446 ff, l. 42.

⁶ Ll. 240, 249, 479-81, 502-32. ⁷ *T. G.*, ll. 503-16; see p. 138 above. ⁸ *C. T.*, A, l. 1508; *F. L.*, l. 272.

⁹ See Chesnel, *Dictionnaire des superstitions* (Paris 1856), p. 101; Mannhardt, *Der Baumkultus*, pp. 343, 365; Chambers, *Book of Days*, Vol. I, p. 571; Schick's notes on *T. G.*, pp. 99, 100, 136; Rolland, *Flore Populaire*, Vol. V (1904), pp. 157 ff.

L'aubépine, la fleur du printemps, était vénérée dans nos campagnes. On en faisait un emblème de pureté, et on lui prêtait des vertus merveilleuses; on en portait aussi une branche comme un préservatif contre le tonnerre.¹

Au temps de la chevalerie, l'amant qui les circonstances condamnait à subir une longue attente avant de voir couronner ses vœux, présentait à la dame que les avait fait naître un rameau d'aubépine, lié d'un ruban de velours incarnat, ce qui signifiait qu'il vivait de l'espérance et demeurait fidèle.²

The nightingale, singer for the Leaf, is frequently associated with the hawthorn, as in *C. N.*, where, after his defense of true love against the scoffing cuckoo, he flies into a hawthorn bush.³ Similarly the nightingale sings from a "thorn" in Lydgate's *Night. II*,⁴ and in *C. L.* he goes to matins "within a temple shapen hawthorn-wise."⁵

Two other kinds of leaves remain for chaplets—"okes cereal," of which also Emily's crown was made when she appeared in Diana's temple,⁶ and *agnus castus*, which was proverbially believed to be a preservative of chastity.⁷

Chaplets of flowers are much more frequently mentioned than chaplets of leaves, and were associated regularly with the festivities of light love. Venus and Cupid are generally represented as crowned with roses.⁸ Oiseuse in *R. R.* likewise wore a chaplet of roses.⁹ Chaucer gives Priapus garlands of flowers in *P. F.*, l. 259.

¹ Tarbé, *Romancero de Champagne* (Reims, 1863), Vol. II, p. 50. Sir John Maundeville also testifies to the potency of the white thorn or "albespine" against thunder (*Travels*, chap. ii).

² Chesnel, *Dictionnaire des superstitions*, p. 101.

³ *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 347 ff., l. 287.

⁴ *Two Nightingale Poems*, ed. Glauning (E. E. T. S., 1900), ll. 10, 11, 61, 355, 356. See Glauning's note on l. 10.

⁵ *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 409 ff., l. 1354.

⁶ *C. T.*, A, l. 2290.

⁷ See Professor Skeat's notes on both cereal oak and *agnus castus*, on *F. L.*, ll. 160, 209. The following may also be added from Gubernatis, *Mythologie des plantes*, Vol. II, p. 4: "Dans les fêtes athéniennes des Thesmophores, les jeunes filles s'ornaient des fleurs de l'*agnus-castus* et couchaient sur les feuilles de cette plante, pour garder leur pureté et leur état de vierges."

⁸ See Schick's note on l. 505 of Lydgate's *T. G.* The following additions may be made to the passages there quoted: Cupid wears a garland of flowers in *Fablel* (ref. p. 162 below), p. 23; in *R. R.*, l. 908, Chaucerian version; in *L. G. W.*, A, l. 160; B, l. 228.

⁹ L. 566, Chaucerian version.

The following passage from Robert of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne* (1303) is of decided interest:

3yf pou euer yn felde, eyper in toune,
Dedyst floure-gerland or coroune
To make wommen to gadyr þere,
To se whych þat feyrer were;
Þys ys aþens þe commaundement,
And þe halyday for þe ys shent;
Hyt ys a gaderyng for lecherye,
And ful grete pryde, & herte hye.¹

Mention of chaplets of flowers is particularly frequent in connection with the observances of May. Thus Colin Muset² says that in May, when the nightingale sings, he must wear a chaplet of flowers "por moi déduire et déporter;" and in another poem he describes companies of young men and girls who

Chantent et font grant revel,
Chascuns a chapel de flor.

An Italian poem of the thirteenth century, attributed to Dino Campagni,³ contains the following lines:

Ne bei mesi d'aprile e di maio,
La gente fa di fior le ghirlandette,
Donzelle e cavalieri d'alto paraio
Cantan d'amore novelle e canzonette.

Froissart tells in his *Paradys d'Amours* of meeting and loving Bel Acueil,

Qui faisoit chapeaus de flourettes.⁴

She makes him a chaplet, and he in payment recites to her his ballade of the marguerite.⁵ Deschamps mentions the making of chaplets of flowers, in connection with the observance of May Day, in both his *Lay Amoureux* and his *Lay de Franchise*.⁶ The ladies whom the hero of *C. O.*⁷ meets are making garlands of flowers. The poems of Christine de Pisan contain numerous

¹ E. E. T. S., ed. Furnivall, Part I (1901), ll. 997 ff.

² *Chansonniers de Champagne*, ed. Tarbé (Reims, 1850), pp. 87, 90, 92.

³ Quoted by Gubernatis, *Mythologie des plantes*, Vol. I, p. 228.

⁴ *Poésies*, ed. Scheler, Vol. I, pp. 1 ff., l. 1473.

⁵ To be discussed below, p. 158.

⁶ To be analyzed in chap. iii below.

⁷ In *Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, ed. Wright (Camden Society, 1841), pp. 310 ff.

references to this custom;¹ and—to conclude a list that might be longer—the lovers in *C. L.* wear garlands of flowers.²

An interesting specific contrast of leaf and flower is in the following passage from *Gubernatis*:

Dans le Tyrol italien, les jeunes filles portent sur leurs cheveux une petite feuille verte, symbole de leur virginité . . . ; le jour de leur mariage, elles perdent le droit de la porter et la remplacent par des fleurs artificielles.³

This is a bit of undated folklore; but the resemblance to part of the symbolism of leaf and flower in *F. L.* is striking. On the whole, it should be very clear that the use of the chaplets in our poem is in accordance with well-defined tradition.

THE CULT OF THE DAISY

Though *F. L.* presents no such description of the daisy as may be found in many another poem, the rôle of that flower is very important, since it is the object worshiped by the green-clad followers of the Flower. Such choice of a particular blossom is not a feature of any other poem we have on the strife of the Flower and the Leaf; but it is not at all surprising, in view of the widespread cult of the daisy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁴

The earliest poem of importance on the subject is Machaut's *Dit de la Marguerite*.⁵ This is a complimentary poem and bears no specific resemblance to *F. L.* The poet emphasizes the connection of the daisy with the affairs of love, saying that its scent produces love and its root cures the pains of love,⁶ and he promises to serve and love this flower only.

Machaut's pupil, Deschamps, has a ballade complimentary to "une dame du nom de Marguerite,"⁷ and virtually repeats the

¹ See *Œuvres*, Vol. I, pp. 218, 236, 239; Vol. II, *Dit de la Pastoure*, ll. 634, 670, pp. 243, 244.

² *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 409 ff., ll. 440, 450. On the general subject of flowers in connection with the observance of May Day, reference may be made to *Gubernatis*, *Mythologie des plantes*, Vol. I, p. 153; Mannhardt, *Der Baumkultus*, p. 344, etc.; and the authorities cited in n. 4, p. 152 above.

³ *Mythologie des plantes*, Vol. I, p. 143.

⁴ See Professor Lowes' article referred to above, p. 124, n. 1. I have limited my discussion to matters directly bearing on *F. L.*

⁵ *Œuvres choisies*, ed. Tarbé, pp. 123-29. ⁶ See Morley's *English Writers*, Vol. V, pp. 133 ff.

⁷ *Œuvres*, Vol. III, p. 379; already referred to in connection with the significance of the colors (p. 143 above).

contents of this ballade in his *Lay de Franchise*.¹ In both these places the flower is spoken of as “*blanche et vermeille*,”² and the lady is said to be endowed with admirable qualities which the different parts of the flower symbolize. In the latter respect, as already noted, there is inconsistency with the allegory of our poem, and the bit of descriptive detail—“*blanche et vermeille*”—is practically inevitable in writing of a “Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow’r.” Hence the only thing especially worthy of note about Deschamps’ love of the daisy is that his tribute in the *Lay de Franchise* occurs in a setting somewhat like that of *F. L.*³

Deschamps was primarily complimenting a lady named Marguerite; Froissart the chronicler, though not guiltless of complimentary intentions, seems really to have loved the flower somewhat as Chaucer loved it. He mentions it nearly everywhere. His best known poem on the subject is the ballade in *Le Paradys d’Amours*,⁴ with the refrain:

Sus toutes flours j’aime la margherite.

In *La Prison Amoureuse*⁵ Froissart used

une fleur petite
Que nous appellons margherite,

for the seal, or *cachet*, of the lover in an amorous correspondence. He imitated Machaut, also, in devoting a whole poem to this favorite flower—*Le Dittié de la Flour de la Margherite*,⁶ in which the praise is similar to that by Chaucer in the Prologue to *L. G. W.* And his seventeenth *Pastourelle*⁷ concludes each stanza with the refrain:

La margherite à la plus belle—

that is, of the shepherdesses celebrated in the poem. It should perhaps be noted especially that in the ballade above referred to the daisy is praised for its enduring freshness (somewhat in contrast with its rôle in *F. L.*), but is associated with springtime and conventional love.

¹ *Œuvres*, Vol. II, pp. 203 ff., ll. 30 ff.

² Compare *F. L.*, 333, and *L. G. W.*, A, 42.

³ See above, p. 135; below, chap. iii.

⁴ *Poésies*, ed. Scheler, Vol. I, p. 49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 241 ff., ll. 898, 899.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 209 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 343 ff.

Whatever cult of the daisy there was in England seems to have been due to the influence of Chaucer, and he doubtless was familiar with some at least of the French poems just mentioned.¹ His tribute in the Prologue to *L. G. W.*,² in close connection as it is with his reference to the strife of the Flower and the Leaf,³ must have been in the mind of the author of our poem; even though he seem inconsistent in making the frivolous company of the Flower do homage to the daisy, whereas in Chaucer the faithful Alcestitis is transformed into that flower. It hardly need be pointed out that this inconsistency resembles that between *F. L.* and Deschamps, who makes the green of the stalk of the daisy symbolize constancy. And it must be admitted that, in spite of the association of this flower with springtime festivities and light love, the exalted position given it by Chaucer and Deschamps is more fully in accord with the common mediæval belief in its healing powers, emphasized in Machaut's *Dit de la Marguerite*.⁴

Various references to Chaucer's happy bit of myth-making in regard to Alcestitis have been pointed out by Professors Skeat and Schick.⁵ In one of these I find striking expression, heretofore unnoticed, of a prominent thought of *F. L.* Lydgate's *Poem against Self-Love*⁶ contains these lines:

Alcestitis flower, with white, with red and greene,
Displaieth hir crown geyn Phebus bemys brihte,
In stormys dreepithe, conseyye what I meene,
Look in thy myrour and deeme noon othir wihte.

The italicized words describe so exactly the state of the flower and its followers after the storm that comes upon them⁷ as to suggest that Lydgate was directly alluding to our poem.

Other notable English references to the daisy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are as follows: In *C. N.*, with its discussion of love, the setting is a land of daisies, and healing properties are attributed to the flower.⁸ The *Compleynt* which

¹ See the articles by Kittredge and Lowes, cited above, p. 124, n. 1.

² Text B, ll. 40-65.

³ B, l. 72.

⁴ See p. 157 above, and the passage from Morley there referred to.

⁵ See Schick's note on ll. 70-74 of Lydgate's *T. G.*, p. 74 of his edition, and the references there given.

⁶ *M. P.*, ed. Halliwell, pp. 156 ff.; especially p. 161.

⁷ *F. L.*, ll. 368-71.

⁸ Ll. 63, 243 ff.; ref. p. 155 above.

Professor Schick prints as an appendix to his edition of *T. G.* presents an extended tribute to the daisy,¹ in which most of the elements found in the French poets and Chaucer are repeated. If Lydgate wrote this poem (as is very doubtful, however) it is especially interesting on account of his very frequent reference to the flower.² "A Ballad" beginning:

In the season of Feuerere whan it was full cold,
printed first with Stowe's Chaucer of 1561, but rejected by Tyrwhitt and subsequent editors,³ is a tribute to the daisy, which may allude to the worship of this flower by the Order of the Flower. Lovers are addressed, and told that they

Owe for to worship the lusty floures alway,
And in especiall one is called see⁴ of the day,
The daisee, a floure white and rede,
And in French called La bele Margarete.

In two poems of some importance later than *F. L.* daisies form part of the setting: in *A. L.*, ll. 57 ff.,⁵ and in *C. L.*, ll. 101 ff.

The refrain purporting to be quoted in *F. L.* from some French original—"Si douce est la margarete"⁶—I have not yet found elsewhere. The fact that the spelling "margarete," to rime with "swete," is not used in French—so far as I can learn—suggests the possibility that the line may have been composed by the English poet to suit the convenience of the rime.

On the whole, the use of the daisy in connection with May Day festivities is more or less conventional, but was probably directly suggested by Chaucer, with very likely a reference to Machaut, Deschamps, or Froissart for the lighter signification attached to the flower in *F. L.* It also seems probable that Lydgate knew our poem and directly alludes to it.

THE NIGHTINGALE

The nightingale in *F. L.* flies to Diana, the lady of the Leaf; the goldfinch, to Flora, the lady of the Flower. The former represents the more serious side of man's nature, shown in affairs of

¹ Ll. 394 ff.

² See Schick's note, p. 74.

³ See Skeat: *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, p. xiii. Most easily accessible in Chalmers' *English Poets*, Vol. I, p. 562.

⁴ Apparently an error for "ee."

⁵ *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 380 ff.

⁶ *F. L.*, l. 350.

love by steadfastness; the latter, the more frivolous side, with a suggestion of inconstancy in love. Here the conformity with literary tradition is not so strict as in relation to most of the other matters discussed in this chapter.

The nightingale, with other birds, was an element of the conventional springtime setting,¹ and as such became inevitably associated with the festivities of love, whether serious and steadfast, or the lighter love with which we have found green garments and garlands of flowers associated. The general popularity of the nightingale in mediæval poetry (or, for that matter, in the poetry of all times and all nations where the bird is found) is too well known to require comment.² A very large number, perhaps even a majority, of all the poems I have read which present the springtime setting give the nightingale a place of prominence—or *the* place of most prominence—among the birds that rejoice the poet's heart, or cheer the lover and remind him of his mistress.³

Along with this general association with love, however, there is a tendency to exalt the character of the nightingale, to associate her⁴ with the better sort of love—with inspiration to brave deeds and even with religion—and thus make it more appropriate that she should be the singer for the brave and steadfast company of the Leaf. Giving the nightingale a serious character is probably due, in part at least, to the bird's association with the classical story of Philomela, and to the mediæval superstition that she

¹ To be discussed in chap. iii below.

² See Uhland, *Abhandlung über die deutschen Volkslieder*, *passim*.

³ On the association of the nightingale with the affairs of love see Neilson, *Harvard Studies*, Vol. VI, pp. 217 ff. The following additions may be made to the examples there referred to: The nightingale cries on the green leaf for love (Mahn, *Gedichte der Troubadours*, Vol. I, p. 173). The nightingale is sent with a message of love to the "jardin d'amour" (Tarbé's *Romancero de Champagne*, Vol. II, p. 159). On the nightingale as a messenger see also Appel, *Provenzalische Chrestomathie*, 2d ed., p. 97; *Romania*, Vol. III, pp. 97, 98; Vol. VII, pp. 55, 57; *Chansons du XV^{me} siècle*, Nos. lxxvii, civ, cxxxix, etc.; Rolland, *Faune populaire de la France* (Paris, 1879), Vol. II, pp. 275 ff. Christine de Pisan, in her *Dit de Poissy* (*Œuvres*, Vol. II, pp. 164, 165), describes the singing of nightingales against "le faulz jaloux." In Chaucer's *T. C.* (II, ll. 918-24) a nightingale sings a love song that lulls Criseyde to sleep. In Lydgate's *B. K.* (*Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, pp. 245 ff.)—

" the nightingale (47)
With so gret mighte her voys gan out-wreste
Right as her herte for love wolde breste."

Cf. this with *F. L.*, ll. 99-102, 447-49.

⁴ Though it is in fact the male nightingale that sings, the mediæval poets generally thought otherwise.

sang with her heart impaled upon a thorn.¹ The following examples will illustrate the tendency:

The burden of the first part of *Fablel* (ed. Jubinal, Paris, 1834) is the nightingale's complaint of the degeneracy of love.

In *Venus* (ed. Förster, Bonn, 1880) the nightingale writes a charter containing a decree of love, in which loyal love is commanded.

Uhland cites examples of the inspiration of warriors by the nightingale's song (*Abhandlung*, ed. Fischer, p. 87).

In Froissart's *Loenge de May* (*Poésies*, ed. Scheler, Vol. II, pp. 194 ff.) the song of the nightingale inspires the lover to ardent praise of his mistress and resolutions of loyalty to her.

In *C. O.* and many of the *Chansons* (e. g., cvi, cix) the nightingale sings to gladden the hearts of those in pain for love.²

The part of the bird is very prominent in the *Chansons*. She "praises true lovers in her pretty song" (lxvii). She is the messenger of a neglected mistress to remind her lover of his duty (lxxii, cxxiii).³ She is asked for advice in a love affair (cxvii).

The nightingale in *C. N.* speaks in defense of true love against the scoffing cuckoo (see p. 155 above, and p. 163 below).

Lydgate's *Two Nightingale Poems* are mainly religious allegories, in which the nightingale represents Christ; but in II, ll. 16, 17, the poet says he "understood that she was asking Venus for vengeance on false lovers." In l. 68 she praises pure love.

In the *Devotions of the Fowls*, printed by Halliwell with Lydgate's *M. P.* (pp. 78 ff.), but of doubtful authenticity, the nightingale sings of Christ's resurrection.

In *The Thrush and the Nightingale* (Hazlitt's *Popular Poetry*, Vol. I, pp. 50 ff.; and *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, Vol. I, p. 241) the nightingale defends women against the attacks of the thrush, and is admitted by the latter to win the victory.

In the *Buke of the Howlat* (*Scottish Alliterative Poems*, ed. Amours; S. T. S., 1897) nightingales (with other birds) sing a hymn to the virgin (ll. 716 ff.).

Dunbar has the nightingale defend the thesis that "All luve is lost bot vpon God allone" (*Poems*, S. T. S., Vol. II, pp. 174 ff.).⁴

So far as a relation of any of the above poems with *F. L.* is concerned, the function of the nightingale is most important in

¹ See Chambers, *Book of Days*, Vol. I, p. 515; Schick's note on Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, II, ii, 50.

² She does not always rejoice the lover, however; see cxx, cxxi.

³ See other examples of use of the nightingale as a messenger, n. 3, p. 161 above.

⁴ The rôle of the bird in the *Owl and the Nightingale* is not exalted, but this poem is considerably earlier than any but a very few of those here considered, and seems to have little, if any, connection with any of them.

C. N. This bird's defense there is primarily of love and love service in general, but the emphasis is distinctly on true service, such as the lovers among the adherents of the Leaf would render.

THE GOLDFINCH

The goldfinch is not nearly so often mentioned as the nightingale, but when he receives a character it is consistent with that given him in *F. L.* Thus the “prentis” in Chaucer's *Cook's Tale*¹ is described as “gaillard . . . as goldfinch in the shawe.” In the pseudo-Chaucerian *Pardonere and Tapstere* I find the expression “as glad as any goldfynch.”² And in *C. L.* the “goldfinch fresh and gay” sings a psalm to the effect that “the god of Love hath erth in governaunce.”³ Professor Skeat's suggestion that the goldfinch in *F. L.* is like the cuckoo in *C. N.* in representing faithless love⁴ is based upon an entirely unjustifiable interpretation of the latter poem. The cuckoo scoffs at love altogether and refuses ever “in loves yok to drawe.”⁵ He argues that lovers are the worst off of all people on earth,⁶ because all sorts of evils come from love.⁷ The cuckoo would agree with the chaste members of the company of the Leaf rather than with the gay adherents of the Flower.

THE LAUREL AND MEDLAR TREES

Whatever significance may be attached to the trees in which the birds sing in *F. L.* has been partly indicated above (p. 154), so far as the laurel is concerned. The laurel has leaves that last,⁸ and has been associated for centuries with noble deeds. In classical mythology Daphne was changed to a laurel to preserve her virginity. The tree was sacred among the Greeks and Romans,⁹ and in mediæval times was credited with power to protect against

¹ *C. T.*, A, l. 4367.

² Chalmers' *English Poets*, Vol. I, p. 638.

³ L. 1371.

⁴ Note at bottom of p. 530, *Chaucerian Pieces*.

⁵ L. 140.

⁶ Ll. 141-44.

⁷ Ll. 171-75.

⁸ As noted by Chaucer in *P. F.*, ll. 173, 182, and by Lydgate in *C. B.* (*M. P.*, p. 180). The latter passage deserves quotation because of the mention of Flora, queen of the Flower in our poem:

“And the laurealle of nature is ay grene,
Of flowres also Flora goddes and quene.”

Further evidences of the popularity of the laurel are given in Glauning's note on *Night*, I, l. 63.

⁹ On the laurel in general see Hehn, *Kulturpflanzen u. Haustierte*, 7th ed. (Berlin, 1902), pp. 220 ff.

thunder,¹ such as the hawthorn also was thought to have. The bird sings from a laurel in Lydgate's *C. B.*,² and the nightingale from a laurel in *Night. I*, l. 63.

The medlar tree, on the other hand, though not very frequently mentioned in mediæval poetry, is plainly associated with hastiness and decay, or over-sudden ripeness, as in Chaucer's *Reeve's Prologue*.³ Shakspeare refers to the same characteristic in language very similar to that of Chaucer,⁴ besides giving the name "rotten medlar" to Mistress Overdone,⁵ and implying bad things of the medlar in *Romeo and Juliet*.⁶ This tree is deciduous; its blossoms last but a short time, and its fruit ripens and rots quickly; so that a certain fitness is manifest in connecting it with the idle, faithless, luckless followers of the Flower.

THE DANCING AND JOUSTING

A few points remain as to the action of the allegory. The singing and dancing of both companies are without special significance. So also, probably, is the jousting among themselves by the knights of the Leaf. Singing and dancing always accompanied the observance of May Day, and jousting was a common feature of nearly every sort of celebration. The details of the jousting in *F. L.* resemble in a general way familiar passages in the *Knight's Tale* and in Lydgate's imitation of the latter, *The Story of Thebes*.⁷ Two French accounts of jousts are also worth mention: that in Christine de Pisan's *Duc des Vrais Amans*, because of the use of green and white costumes;⁸ and that in Deschamps' *Lay de Franchise*,⁹ because the setting there and portions of the action somewhat resemble those of *F. L.*

THE STORM

The storm that was so uncomfortable for the followers of the Flower seems significant only as to its result. In its combination of wind and hail and rain it bears some resemblance to the

¹ See Chesnel, *Dictionnaire des superstitions*, p. 539; Hone's *Year Book*, p. 776.

² *M. P.*, p. 181.

³ *C. T.*, A. ll. 3871-73.

⁴ *A. Y. L. I.*, III, ii, 125-28.

⁵ *M. M.*, IV, iii, 184.

⁶ II, i, 35, 36.

⁷ *C. T.*, A, ll. 2599 ff.; *Thebes*, in Chalmers' *English Poets*, Vol. I, pp. 581, etc.

⁸ See p. 152, 153 above.

⁹ Ref. p. 143 above.

miraculous storm in Chrestian de Troyes' *Yvain*;¹ but the resemblance is not strong enough to justify any assumption of relationship. The most striking comments on a storm, so far as possible relations with *F. L.* are concerned, are in Lydgate's *Testament*,² as follows:

Lych as in Ver mōn gretly them delite
 To beholde the bewté sovereyne
 Of thes blomys, som blew, rede, and white,
 To whos fresshnesse no colour may atteyne,
 But than unwarly comyth a wynd sodeyne,
 For no favour list nat for to spare
 Fresshnesse of braunchys, for to make hem bare.

 Whan Ver is fresshest of blomys and of flourys,
 An unwar storm his fresshnesse may apayre.

RELATION OF *F. L.* WITH THE *LAY DU TROT*

The bedraggled condition of the adherents of the Flower after the storm is worthy of note chiefly because it has been compared with the condition of a company of women in the Old French *Lay du Trot*. This comparison was first made by Sandras,³ and has been repeated by others.⁴

Substantially the same story appears in several forms, of which the Breton *Lay du Trot* is probably the earliest.⁵ In this poem Lorois, a knight of Arthur's court, sees passing through the midst of a forest two companies of ladies. The ladies of one company ride on white palfreys, are splendidly arrayed, crowned with roses, and accompanied by *amis*, all because of their graciousness in matters of love. The ladies of the other company are mounted on wretched nags, miserably dressed, and in torment because they have cruelly refused to love.

In the Latin work of Andreas Capellanus, *De Amore*,⁶ there are three companies of women led by the God of Love. Those in

¹ Ed. W. Foerster (Halle, 1887), ll. 397-407, 432-50.

² *M. P.*, ed. Halliwell, pp. 245, 246.

³ *Étude sur Chaucer*, pp. 104, 105.

⁴ Notably by Morley, *English Writers*, Vol. V.

⁵ *Lai d'Iguamès*, ed. Moumerqué and Michel (Paris, 1832). I have not had access to this edition, and am therefore indebted to Sandras, and to notes kindly lent me by Professor W. H. Schofield, of Harvard, for my brief analysis.

⁶ *Andreas Capellani Regii Francorum de Amore*, ed. Trojel (Copenhagen, 1892). This work is very important in relation to mediæval imitation of Ovid, *R. R.*, the Court of Love poems, etc., and has therefore been analyzed at length by Neilson, Mott, Langlois, and others.

the first company are gorgeously arrayed, well mounted, and attended each by three knights. They are women who, while alive, wisely bestowed their love. The second troop are in great discomfort because of the number who wish to wait on them; they are women of loose virtue. The women of the third troop are like those of the second in the *Lay du Trot*. One of their number explains the significance of all three companies. The whole vision is described by a knight to a lady whom he wishes to frighten out of her coldness.

Gower's tale of Rosiphele, in the fourth book of the *Confessio Amantis*,¹ is in essentials only slightly different. The heroine

hadde o defalte of Slowthe
Towardes love,

and could not be prevailed upon to think of matrimony. While walking in a park before sunrise one day in May, she saw a company of ladies richly clad in white and blue, and mounted on great white horses well caparisoned. They were followed by a woman with torn attire, who rode alone on a very sorry looking horse and carried all the halters for the others. This woman, when asked, explained that the ladies whom she attended were "servantz to love" (1376), and that she was but their "horse knave" (1399) because she "liste noght to love obeie" (1389).²

On the whole, it is difficult to see how these stories can have been thought very similar to *F. L.* Even the miserable women are miserable chiefly because of their lack of attendants and the condition of their horses, and their plight is not due to any cause even remotely resembling the storm in our poem. In Gower's version, indeed, the woman is

Fair of visage, (1361)
Freyssh, lusti, yong and of tendre age;

a very different person from one who has just been burned by sun and drenched by rain and bruised by hail. The allegory, too, is

¹ Ll. 1245 ff.

² In purpose Boccaccio's tale of Anastasio (*Decamerone*, V, 8) is similar to these; but the details are different, as the cavalcade disappears, and we have instead a single lady suffering great tortures after death for her hard-heartedness. On this whole matter of the "purgatory of cruel beauties," see an article by Professor Neilson in *Romania*, Vol. XXIX, pp. 85 ff.

in most respects different; for the persons in *F. L.* that correspond most nearly in character to the unfortunate women in these stories are, not any of the adherents of the Flower, but the strictly chaste members of the company of the Leaf (*F. L.*, 477). The only resemblance in the allegory is in the fact that the adherents of the Flower are condemned for idleness, and Gower's serving woman is being punished for sloth (or idleness) in love. This seems to be a superficial resemblance, not in harmony with the spirit of our poem. Thus the real similarities are few and nearly all general; namely: the fact that there are contrasted companies, one of which is in sorry plight of some kind and for some reason (for the kind and the reason are not similar); the fact that in Gower the fortunate company are clad in white and blue, in *F. L.* in white; and the fact that a member of one of the companies explains who all the people are and what their action means.¹ It is probable that the author of our poem knew the story in Gower, but there is no sufficient reason for assuming a knowledge of the *Lay du Trot* or Andreas Capellanus.

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¹ The interpreter is common to all allegories; see chap. iii, below, *passim*, and Neilson, *Harvard Studies*, Vol. VI, pp. 213 ff. The significance of the colors has been discussed on pp. 143-46 above.